



Summit is all about Tahoe dollars

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Lawmakers will likely announce how much federal money is headed for Lake Tahoe restoration efforts for 2007 at an annual environmental summit Thursday at Sand Harbor.

Tahoe usually receives around \$35 million per year.

Inaugurated in 1997 by President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore, the Lake Tahoe Summit has become an annual media event to discuss progress and further conservation goals in the region.

Senators John Ensign, R-Nev., and Harry Reid, D-Nev., will host this year's event, which is expected to focus on fire prevention and water quality protection efforts.

Congressman John Doolittle, R-Calif., Nevada Gov. Kenny Guinn, and Congressman Jim Gibbons, R-Nev., are also expected to attend. The event is open to the public, but seating is limited and reservations are required.

Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne will attend and will likely bring news about how much money from sales of public land in Southern Nevada will come to Tahoe in 2007.

In the past, the Interior Department has allotted around \$35 million per year from revenues from the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act.

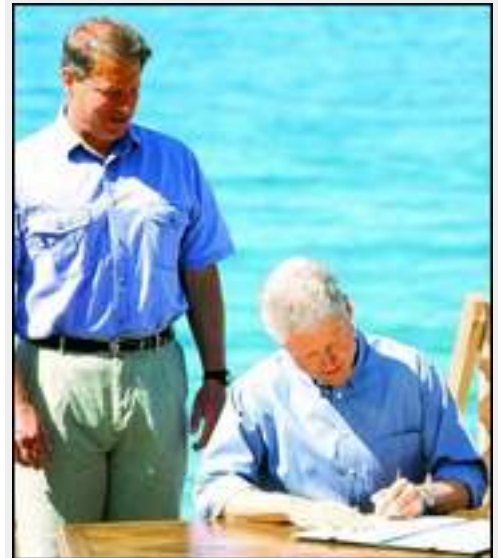
"We are expecting a significant increase (in funds from the Act) will be dedicated to fire prevention," said Rex Norman, spokes man for the U.S. Forest Service in Lake Tahoe. "We are going to get a record number of dollars to tackle that problem."

The act is also financing the purchase of the 777-acre Lake Incline property off the Mount Rose highway above Incline Village.

Sen. Ensign is set to give an update on the federal acquisition of the 770-acre Incline Lake property.

A year ago, Ensign stood on the shores of Incline Lake and announced its acquisition for public use would take only one year. The property is currently in its appraisal phase and funds allocated for it were formally approved

Dan Thrift / Tahoe Daily Tribune file / Vice-President Al Gore, left, watches President Bill Clinton sign the executive order earmarking \$300 million for Lake Tahoe in 1997.



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by then Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton in February.

The Southern Nevada funds came under scrutiny last year from the Bush Administration as a possible source of income to help offset the federal budget deficit. Ensign and Reid went to bat for the Act, which guaranteed most of the money would return to Nevada for restoration efforts.

On Thursday, officials are also expected to review the accomplishments of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, a 10-year, \$1.2 billion-dollar program launched by the first summit in 1997. The funds are coming from federal, state, municipal and private sources.

So far, \$512 million has been spent on 269 public improvement projects and 9,100 private parcel projects, according to the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency.

The projects have focused on improving water quality and erosion control, air quality, recreation, wildlife habitat and scenic areas.

Also Thursday, Placer County Supervisor Bruce Kranz will give a presentation on the challenges and solutions of using forest debris in biomass energy generators as an option in fire prevention.

Forest Service officials have said fire prevention with biomass technology is at least 10 years away, and could require building hundreds of miles of roads in sensitive or steep areas in Tahoe.

- Bonanza staff writer Andrew Pridgen contributed to this report

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